

Ghost Battalion Clears the Field

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- When members of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, began constructing a youth soccer field in the town of Taraymia, insurgents began a plan to spread their anti-multinational message.

Unfortunately several unexploded ordinances (UXO) were buried under the soccer field prior to construction. When a child was killed playing on the field, insurgents began their propaganda: "Americans are building soccer fields to kill your children."

Working to dispel the rumors, Soldiers of the Oregon National Guard's Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, 2-7 Cav. escorted members of the 766th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company to the soccer field to search out and destroy any remaining UXOs, Dec 8.

"[Anti-Iraqi forces] are going around telling everyone in Taraymia that Coalition Forces are purposely booby-trapping this soccer field," said Capt. Coley Tyler, public affairs officer, 2-7 Cav. "Obviously this is just absolutely not true. As a show of good faith and at the request of Taraymia council members, we're out here today with EOD who is going over the field with a fine-tooth-comb. Should we find anything, we'll get rid of it."

"The soccer field is just one part of what will eventually be an entire youth sports facility," said Capt. David Sturtz,



Sgt. Preston Washington (left), Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, watches as Staff Sgt. Mike Tilly, 766th EOD Co. digs for suspected unexploded ordnance at a soccer field on the village of Taraymia.



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Staff Sgt. Mike Tilly, with the 766th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, sets detonation cords to blow-in-place two pieces of unexploded ordnance found after a citizen of the village of Taraymia indicated where the UXOs could be found.

Team Chief, Company B, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion attached to 2-7 Cav.

Sturtz said in addition to the soccer field, plans are being made for stadium seating around the field, a club house and shops around the area.

"All told we intend to spend about \$87,000 on this project," he said "But before we can really succeed with this project, we must win the trust of the people of Taraymia, we must show them that AIF messages are lies, that we intend no harm."

Spreading out across the field, Soldiers of the EOD Company and Company B, 2-162nd INF made an initial sweep checking for any obvious signs of ordnance. When no ordnance was found, metal detectors were used on the second sweep. As the field was checked, Soldiers spoke with citizens around the immediate area, passed out soccer balls and asked for any information that might aid in their search.

"Several people have indicated that there are explosives on the outer perimeter of the field," Tyler said.

In response, the scope of the search was broadened to include the indicated

areas, and still nothing was found.

The mound of dirt looked like any of the other patches of dirt on the construction site. Vehicle track marks and footprints marked the ground. Adjacent to the field was an Iraqi home. As a young, male resident of the home stood outside the gate, the women in the house sneaked a peak from behind the protective iron entrance. A soccer ball was passed to a little boy unleashing a flourish of rapid-fire Arabic from the women inside. A translator was summoned.

"Right there!" the women exclaimed as she indicated the dirt mound across from the house. Speaking through a translator, the women said she had seen two men burying explosives in the dirt mound.

It didn't take long for Staff Sgt. Michael Tilly of the 766th EOD Co. to find two pieces of unexploded ordnance. The area was cleared and Tilly set about to do what EOD Soldiers do best, blow up the ordnance.

"Missions like these are essential to the success of projects in Taraymia," Tyler said. "People have to see us out here making sure the area is safe."

Engineers Hammer Out New Chapel

By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT Public Affairs

CAMP TIGERLAND, Baghdad -- Soldiers from Company B, 411th Engineer Battalion are making Iraq feel a little more like home for the 256th Tiger Brigade Combat Team. A new chapel for the brigade is the latest improvement slated for the unit.

Lt. Col. Robert Baker, chaplain for the 256th Brigade Combat Team, is working hand-in-hand with the 411th to see that the project is completed on time. And he lets the engineers how much their work means the Tiger Brigade.

"I go to the construction site every day to talk to them and bring them goodies on behalf of the brigade to show our appreciation," he said.

The 411th is a gumbo of different units all its own. It is made up of Soldiers from Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and all over the south Pacific. They've been busy.

"Right now, we're scheduled to open the new Tigerland Chapel for the holidays with the first service being on Christmas Eve," Baker said. "It will hold a capacity of about two hundred people ...maybe a little more."

Staff Sgt. Scott Strong of the 411th is overseeing the construction for his battalion. He said the project fell into their laps at the last minute, but that his team is well prepared to complete their mission by the deadline.

"Our projects usually land in our laps within a week of when we're supposed to start them and we go out and assess the site to see what kind of materials we may need," he said.

Strong said there are never any real set plans right away, but that once they receive the blueprints, things just start



By Spc. Erin Robicheaux, 256th BCT Public Affairs

Sgt. Angelique Yacapin a carpenter with the 411th Engineer Battalion hammers a nail into what will soon be a place of worship for the Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team.

falling neatly into place for his team.

In the nine months that the 411th has been in Iraq, they have been given seven projects ranging from the 1st Cavalry Division's Judge Advocate General office to some housing projects. They have even built a post exchange (PX) and a helipad.

The 411th is responsible for sites inside of Camp Liberty.

A major player in Strong's team of carpenters is Sgt. Angelique Yacapin, from Hawaii. As a civilian, she is working toward a career in carpentry as an apprentice under the Carpenter's Union in her area. Yacapin says that she has loved building things since she was a little girl.

"My mom has a farm and as I was growing up, we used to build stuff all the time for her," she said. "We've built a lot

of structures like greenhouses and chicken coops, and I really like doing this sort of work."

Baker sang high praises of Yacapin. He said her hard work and the labor of her fellow Soldiers will make this a better place for the Soldiers of the 256th.

"The 411th has some great folks and Sgt. Yacapin is one of their best, even according to her boss," he said. "The Soldiers of the 256 BCT need to make sure that they attend services in the new chapel once it's complete."

Baker added that the new building will be brighter and seem a lot more cheery than the current tent that he is using for services.

"The new structure will definitely be a chapel that the Tiger Brigade can be proud to worship in," he said.

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Can you show me that one?
mumkin tureenee zaalik?

Monday
High: 52
Low: 32



Tuesday
High: 52
Low: 28



Wednesday
High: 55
Low: 30



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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News Notes

Martha Stewart Behind on Taxes

HARTFORD, Connecticut (Reuters) -- Trendsetter guru Martha Stewart, serving a five-month prison sentence for lying about a suspicious stock sale, is in trouble with tax authorities in Connecticut for missing a property tax payment.

George Underhill, tax collector in Westport, Connecticut, said on Wednesday Stewart had failed to make the quarterly payments on her two properties in the town that were due on Oct. 1, a week before she went to prison. With interest she now owes almost \$10,000. Underhill said Stewart would continue to be charged interest at 18 percent annually and if her taxes were not paid by June 2005 then the matter would go to the town foreclosure committee.

Candy Caper Leads to Santa Assault

ATLANTA (AP) -- A man dressed as Santa Claus was charged with assault Friday, accused of using a board to strike a 74-year-old woman in the face and head. Elkin Donnie Clarke also allegedly threatened to hit a second woman who stepped in to get him to stop hitting Annie Ruth Nelson, 74. The second woman was not injured, but Nelson was knocked unconscious and taken to a hospital. Clarke told police that Nelson had taken 29 sealed boxes of chocolates worth \$145 from him, but witnesses did not confirm his story.

Washington State Areas See Floods, Road Closures

(Seattle Times) -- Swollen rivers in Western Washington counties yesterday forced dozens of families to abandon their homes, stranded some motorists and closed some roads.

But overall, the major storm the region was bracing for never materialized. Only pockets of Snohomish and Skagit counties reportedly had significant flooding, and many counties didn't deploy the thousands of sandbags rescue workers and volunteers had prepared.

Flooding hit east Skagit County hardest, where about 20 homes on Cockerham Island, near Hamilton, and Thunderbird, east of Concrete, were evacuated as a precaution. No major damage was reported. A section of South Skagit Highway, off state Highway 9 east of Clear Lake, was washed out by the flood.

The National Weather Service issued flood warnings last night for the Skagit, Skokomish, Snohomish and Snoqualmie rivers. In King County, 13 roads near Snoqualmie Valley were closed because of flooding from the Tolt and Snoqualmie rivers.



Seattle Times

Wes Smith helps his nephew, Jonathon Wakefield, cross flooded 311th Avenue Southeast in Sultan, Wash.

Children's Book Captures 9/11 Survivor's Story

WASHINGTON (Army News Service Dec. 10, 2004) - After three years, numerous surgeries and months spent in the hospital recovering, the story of a Pentagon employee who helped others to safety on 9/11, comes to life in the form of a children's book.

The book titled, "It's Okay to Cry," is a story about compassion, courage and hope. The employee, John Yates and the book's author Meg Bragg were on hand Dec. 8 for a book sale and signing near the Pentagon concourse.

Yates was working as a security manager at the Pentagon when the plane crashed into the building Sept. 11, 2001. Although he was burned

over 35 percent of his body, he helped lead others to safety by forming a human chain.

The book's name was derived from one of the many get-well cards Yates received from children around the country while recovering in the hospital. "It just had this face drawn on it with a little diamond for a teardrop that said 'It's okay to cry, love Jessica,'" Yates said.

Yates' wife, Ellen, shared the card with Bragg during one of their daily phone conversations. Bragg said she felt compelled to help after the terrorists attack on the twin towers and the Pentagon. She made pies, sent clothes and other things, but she wanted to do something for the children.

"I wanted to do something that would reach them-but I didn't know how to do that the right way," Bragg said, who was a schoolteacher for 17 years. "When Ellen told me about this card, it just hit me-this is the way to do it."

He said he hears the comments all the time, "It's been three years; get over it." If he could go the rest of his life with never having to relay the story again, he said that would be great, but "I can't because I don't want it to happen again."

"It's Okay to Cry" was originally written for 5-year-olds and older and Bragg has used it in kindergarten through seventh grade. "I wanted the book to be a positive thing. Not sugar coat what happened, but not so devastating that they [children] don't sleep at night," said Bragg. "It's [the book] a nice parallel between his recovery and the nation's recovery."



Army News Service

John Yates, a survivor of the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon, signs a copy of the book, "It's Okay to Cry" as the book's author Meg Bragg looks on during a book sale and signing at the Pentagon.

The Bus Uses Passing Lane, Claims AFC Title

PITTSBURGH, Pa. (Sports Network) -- Jerome Bettis ran for a touchdown and threw for another score to lift Pittsburgh over the New York Jets, 17-6, en route to capturing the AFC North title at Heinz Field.

Ben Roethlisberger completed 9-of-19 passes for 144 yards with two interceptions for the Steelers (12-1), who clinched their third division title in four years.

"Well, it's the first step," said Pittsburgh head coach Bill Cowher on clinching the division. "This football team has been a very focused team and they understand that it's a journey."

Pittsburgh, which has won 11 straight games, also kept an edge on the No. 1 seed in the AFC Playoffs. Pittsburgh and New England are both now 12-1, but the Steelers would own any tie-breaker with the Patriots by virtue of a head-to-head win in Week 8.

The game was knotted at 3-3, but Jerame Tuman hauled in a 10-yard touchdown pass



AP

For those keeping score, Jerome Bettis has two more career touchdown passes than Eli Manning.

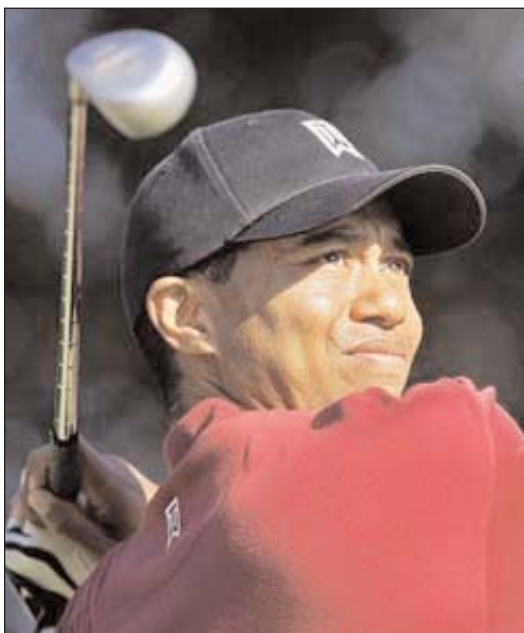
from Bettis on a halfback option to put the Steelers ahead by seven and they led the rest of the way. The eight play, 80-yard drive, which was finalized with 12:51 remaining, was highlighted by a 12-yard run by Bettis.

With three minutes left, Bettis ran for a 12-yard score to cap off the scoring and conclude a 6-play, 69-yard pos-

session.

"They made a play," said Jets head coach Herman Edwards. "That is what good teams, championship teams do. They make plays in the fourth quarter when the game is tight. They were able to make plays and we were not."

The Jets outgained the Steelers in total offense, 296 to 262 yards.



AP

"Every shot I wanted to hit, I hit," Tiger Woods said. Woods had a two-stroke victory over Padraig Harrington in the Target World Challenge.

Woods Wins California Challenge, \$1.25 Million

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) -- At this rate, Tiger Woods probably can't wait for the 2005 season to start.

Woods played his most complete round of a difficult year Sunday, missing two fairways and one green in closing with a 5-under-par 66 for a two-stroke victory over Padraig Harrington in the Target World Challenge.

It was Woods' second straight stroke-play title after he had gone without one on the PGA Tour for the first time in his career.

Last month, Woods won the Dunlop Phoenix on the Japanese tour by eight shots. The Target World Challenge is outside of any tour and doesn't count as an official victory.

But Woods beat an elite 16-man field with a game that is starting to look vaguely familiar.

"Every shot I wanted to hit, I hit," Woods said.

He finished at 16-under 268 and won \$1.25 million, which he donated to his foundation.

Harrington closed with a bogey for a 66, his only consolation a \$750,000 check.

In Brief

Anderson Sets Sights on Comedy

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) -- In a major workout for her acting chops, Pamela Anderson will star in a Fox sitcom



about a woman who's trying to change her life and break her habit of falling

for less-than-responsible men. Before even reading a completed script, the network committed to six episodes of the project from writer-producer Steven Levitan, who created NBC's *Just Shoot Me*.

Ocean's Twelve is One Step Above 11

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - *Ocean's Twelve*, the heist caper that George Clooney, Brad Pitt and their A-list pals shot in their spare time while living it up in Europe, stole the No. 1 slot at the North American weekend box office. According to studio estimates issued on Sunday, the Warner Bros. film sold \$40.9 million worth of tickets in the three days since opening on Dec. 10. It marks the fourth-biggest opening for a December release, after the *Lord of the Rings* movies, and narrowly surpassed its 2001 predecessor, *Ocean's Eleven*, which opened with \$38.1 million in 200 fewer theaters and finished with \$184 million. Given the success of *Ocean's Eleven*, a sequel was inevitable, and all the stars returned, including Matt Damon, Julia Roberts, Andy Garcia, Don Cheadle and Bernie Mac.